

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### A RED SISTER.

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#### CHAPTER XX.

THE storm which had so long threatened broke before day dawned ; thunder, lightning, hail, and rain came in one terrific outburst. The sky had the whole of the grandeur and beauty of the storm to itself ; for in this low-lying country there were no sharp-peaked mountains to rip open the packed clouds and make them discharge their cargoes of fire, nor amphitheatre of hills to throw back an echo to the loud-voiced thunder.

The racket of the storm set the household at the Castle stirring at an early hour. The first crash of thunder sent Lois down on her knees praying for all poor souls in danger or distress ; and there she remained, with hands covering her face, until the last peal had growled itself out in the far distance where daylight was faintly breaking.

There were two sleepers in the Castle that night, however, for whom it mattered little whether the thunder growled high or growled low—John Gaskell and his aged father.

After those brief, stern words addressed to his wife, John Gaskell never spoke again, and within two hours from the time at which his father had died he breathed his last.

Lois, coming downstairs, dressed ready to set off for Summerhill, had the sad news told her by Lucy Harwood, who chanced to be crossing the corridor at the moment.

A door on her right hand suddenly opening, led her to hope that her eager longing to clasp Herrick's hand, to look up in Herrick's face with eyes that spoke their sympathy, was to be gratified. She turned hastily round, and her heart fell, for not Herrick, but Lady Joan stood before her.

No pale, heavy-eyed watcher this, such as one might expect to see issue forth from a chamber of death, but a woman with bright, tearless eyes, hard-set mouth, and two brilliant spots of red on either cheek.

She closed the door behind her with a steady hand. The room she had just quitted was old Mr. Gaskell's room ; she had nerved herself to pass through it on her way to the corridor, without so much as turning her head away from the white-swathed form lying still and silent beneath the purple-curtained bed.

Thirty years ago Lady Joan, as she had heard the door close behind Vaughan Elliot, had said to herself, "That man must go at once and for ever out of my life." Now as she closed this door behind her, the same words were in her heart. "What is past is past," she said to herself. "This man must go as utterly out of my life as that other did."

But the remorselessness of the tearing, ravening beast of prey is not attained by the human animal without cost. Lois, as she looked at the hectic spots on either cheek, and noted the feverish, dancing eyes, said to herself :

"She will break down before night. Ah, if only I could be a help and comfort to Herrick's mother !"

Lady Joan's first words were addressed to Lucy, not Lois.

"You are up singularly early—how is

this?" was all that she said; but the voice which spoke the words had a ring of iron in it.

Both the girls shrank from her instinctively. Lucy looked confused and frightened.

Lady Joan repeated her question, fixing what seemed to Lois a hard, scrutinising look upon the girl's face.

"I had bad dreams, my lady—I could not sleep," answered Lucy, "and so I thought it better to get up, and come down."

"Quite so. I shall have something to say to you presently about those bad dreams of yours. Go into my sitting-room if you please, I will speak to you there."

Lucy hurriedly departed. Then Lady Joan addressed Lois: "I see you are ready to go. I will give orders for one of the grooms to drive you to Summerhill. No doubt you have well thought over the conversation I had with you yesterday, and have come to the conclusion that the course I advised was the right one."

"Come to a conclusion!" She might as well have asked a rain-cloud, with a hurricane blowing, if it had come to a conclusion whether it would travel east or west, as this poor child with her heart counselling one thing, and her conscience another.

Words did not come easily to her, so Lady Joan resumed:

"In the course of the day I will send you a cheque that will amply provide for your travelling and other expenses. America I think you said was likely to be your destination. Of course you will lose no time in leaving Summerhill, and I would farther suggest that your letter to my son, breaking off your engagement—that is if one has ever existed—should not be written until after your departure."

Lois looked all around her helplessly. Where was Herrick? How was it that Lady Joan dared speak in this way, as if Herrick were miles away, instead of under the same roof, and perhaps not twenty yards distant.

But Lady Joan knew well enough where Herrick was—kneeling in a stupor of grief beside his dead father, with his warm young hand clasping the clay-cold one, as he had clasped it in the moment of death.

Again she waited for Lois to speak; but as never a word escaped the girl's lips, she went on once more:

"Any details on this matter which may

embarrass or trouble you, I shall be very pleased to arrange for you; but I would suggest that all our communications should be by letter—to any letters you may send me I will promptly reply."

Lois gave another hurried look around her. With all those doors in sight, was there no hope of any one of them opening, and Herrick coming forth?

Her eyes drooped beneath Lady Joan's fixed gaze, and she said, timidly, "Before I go this morning, may I say good-bye to old Mr. Gaskell? Herrick promised me last night that I should do so."

A peculiar expression passed over Lady Joan's face. "He was too free with his promises," she said, coldly. "Old Mr. Gaskell is dead."

"Dead!" repeated Lois, blankly. Her eyes grew round and startled. She staggered against the wall of the corridor as if her limbs had suddenly failed her and she needed support.

Lady Joan frowned.

"There is nothing surprising in the fact, I suppose. Will you be good enough to tell me what there is in it to affect you so strangely?"

But Lois only grew white and whiter, and kept repeating, with her large startled eyes fixed on Lady Joan's face:

"Dead! dead!"

Lady Joan lost patience.

"My words are easy enough to understand, I imagine. At any rate, I have neither time nor inclination to repeat them. I will wish you good morning. I suppose you are leaving at once?"

Lois clasped her hands together impetuously.

"And you are Herrick's mother!" she cried in a low, passionate voice. "Go! Yes—I will go! I will never look upon your face again in this world if I can help it!"

Then, with an effort, she seemed to gather her strength together, and, with feet that stumbled as she went, she crossed the corridor and went towards the hall-door.

It had already opened that morning to admit and despatch messengers in spite of the storm and the early hour, so its heavy bolts were drawn back, and she could let herself out without difficulty.

Lady Joan for a moment stood watching her.

"An ill-trained, hysterical young woman," she said to herself. "Madly in love with Herrick, not a doubt! Well, so

much the better in one way ; it gives me a sort of guarantee that she will not mar his future for him ! ”

And without so much as a thought of what Lois might suffer in the effort “not to mar Herrick’s future for him,” Lady Joan went on her way to her boudoir, there to question Lucy as to her “bad dreams.”

Outside the deluge of rain had ceased, and only a heavy, drizzling mist fought with and quenched the brilliance of the early dawn.

It was about half-past five when Lois passed through the park-gates and gained the high road, which ran a very river of mud. Her feet were wet through before she had gone a quarter of a mile towards Summerhill. She shivered from head to foot, yet her cheeks burned and her eyes glowed and danced as if from fever. Her steps grew swift and swifter, as if a matter of life or death hung upon her speed. Her breath came in quick gasps ; the drizzling, heavy mist seemed to choke her ; all sorts of strange noises were humming and buzzing in her ear, yet on and on she went with ever-increasing speed till she gained the cross-roads which lay between the Catholic church of St. Elizabeth and the private road leading to Summerhill.

Then, from sheer want of breath, the girl was compelled to pause. So far along her road she had met no one, not even a farm-labourer or gipsy-tramp. Now, as she leaned for a moment against a wet, mossy fence, and tried to think where she was going, what she meant to do, she could distinctly hear the sound of approaching footsteps.

Something else, beside approaching footsteps, made itself heard above the rush and murmur of strange sounds in her ears—the tolling of St. Elizabeth’s bell.

She started, and for a moment felt puzzled and bewildered. Then, as her thoughts began to clear themselves, she recollected what Father Elliot had said to her about the early and other services which he intended holding daily. And, lifting her eyes, she saw the Father himself approaching by a lane which led from his cottage straight to his church. He saw and recognised her immediately.

“Good morning ! You are an early riser ! ” he said, as he crossed the road towards her. Then, as her tearful, scared face caught his eye, he added, in a changed tone : “My child, what is it ? What has happened ? Tell me.”

Lois clung to his arm.

“Help me ! help me ! ” she cried, piteously. “I want a hiding-place ! ”

#### CHAPTER XXI.

AT whatever cost secured, Lady Joan’s calmness, as she cross-questioned Lucy as to her “bad dreams,” presented a marked contrast to the manner of the girl, who was flurried and nervous to a degree, and seemed utterly incapable of giving a clear account of her broken rest of over-night.

“I have no recollection whatever what my dreams were, my lady,” she reiterated. “Indeed, indeed, they have quite gone out of my mind.”

“Do you ever have any recollection of your bad dreams when the morning comes ? ” asked Lady Joan, bending a curious look on her.

“Oh yes, my lady, when I wake up and find myself in a strange place.”

“Then you are in the habit of walking in your sleep ? ”

The girl grew confused. She had evidently been surprised into making this admission.

“Not in the habit. Oh no, my lady. I have done so once or twice in my life,” she said, after a moment’s pause.

“When did you last walk in your sleep —I mean before you came here ? ” pursued Lady Joan.

“About a year ago, my lady.”

“Well, and you woke up and found yourself—where ? ”

“In the churchyard, my lady,” said the girl, and her eyes dropped ; her colour changed again.

“In the churchyard. Then, of course, you recollected the dream which had sent you there ? ”

The girl hung her head lower still. She was evidently too frightened of Lady Joan to refuse to reply, and too truthful to prevaricate. So she answered, falteringly : “I dreamt I was looking for—for some one’s name on a gravestone, and I suppose in my sleep I got up, put on my hat and cloak, and walked to the churchyard—it was the touch of the cold gravestone which woke me.”

She nearly broke down as she finished speaking. Lady Joan, however, went on mercilessly as before.

“And I suppose, when I met you two nights ago in the hall walking and talking in your sleep, you had been dreaming of

the same person, and had come down from your room in search of him or her."

"Ye-es, my lady."

"Now be so good as to fix your mind steadily for a moment on the thoughts which filled your brain when you went to bed last night, and see if you cannot recall some vestige of those bad dreams which made you get up so unconscionably early this morning?"

But the question was a useless one. Lucy's only rejoinder to it was the repetition of her assertion that here her memory failed her altogether.

So Lady Joan resumed her cross-examination at another point.

"Have you ever," she said, still steadily eyeing the girl, "walked in your sleep, and—having no recollection of so doing—been told of it afterwards by some one who had seen you?"

"Yes, my lady," answered Lucy, hesitatingly. "If I wake up in my bed in the morning I have no recollection of what I have done in the night—I mean, I cannot tell whether I have really done a thing, or have only dreamt it."

"Ah-h." And here Lady Joan drew a long breath, and thought awhile. After all, the danger might be less than she had imagined it to be. Lucy had perhaps opened and shut the dressing-room door in her sleep, and in her sleep had returned to her room and got into bed. It might be this, or it might be that the girl was so accustomed to prevaricate and tell falsehoods as to her somnambulist propensities—about which she appeared to be very sensitive—that she was able to give an air of veracity to her narrative which a less-practised story-teller would have found an impossibility. In any case, it would be as well to keep an eye on the girl for the present, and in a variety of ways at different intervals to test the truth of her narrative.

So, after a few moments of thought, she said in a less stern voice than that in which she had pressed her interrogatories:

"You may go now. Later on I will speak to you again. I think, as I told you before, that you should have medical advice. And I will like to see you—your—I forget—father or brother, was it?"

"Brother, my lady."

"Your brother, and speak to him on the matter. Write to him in the course of the day, and tell him I wish him to come here to see me."

As the girl withdrew, Herrick's voice was heard outside the door, asking her:

"Is Lady Joan here?"

The question gave Lady Joan time to withdraw her thoughts from Lucy to the matter on which, without a doubt, Herrick had come to interrogate her.

Most mothers and sons meeting thus within a few hours of the death of husband and father, would have been in each other's arms in a moment, and tears and kisses would have done duty for any amount of spoken sympathy.

Not so this mother and son. Their common sorrow had been no "cord of love" to draw them nearer to each other, but rather a measure that enabled them to gauge the distance they stood apart. When, at the moment of his father's death, Herrick's voice had rung forth its one passionate cry of rebellion against the iron law which made death, not life, the ruler of the universe, Lady Joan had stood by saying never a word; and when he had knelt in a stupor of grief, clasping his dead father's hand, she had quietly left the room, bent on her own business and on dismissing from the house the girl he loved.

The young man looked white, dazed, forlorn as he entered the room. He bent one long, scrutinising look on his mother. The terrible suspicion of her wavering reason which he had found himself compelled to entertain overnight, had not yet faded from his brain, and he was in hopes that the morning light might put it to flight.

Lady Joan's flushed face and brilliant eyes were scarcely reassuring.

"I thought you had gone to your room to lie down, mother," he said, still prepared to show her any amount of kindness, though tenderness in the circumstances could scarcely be expected of him.

Then he put the question she was prepared for.

"Have you seen Lois this morning? Or is she not stirring yet?"

"Pardon me, Lady Joan. One moment!" said Dr. Scott, coming into the room in a great hurry, "but will you kindly tell me what has become of the aconite, and other liniments, which were in use in the sick-room overnight? The nurses seem to know nothing about them."

"I have locked up all the medicines and liniments in my medicine-cupboard," said Lady Joan, calmly; "I do not like such deadly poisons lying about."



"Ah, quite so! Then it is all right," said the doctor, as he withdrew.

Then Lady Joan turned to Herrick:

"I saw her about half-an-hour ago," she replied, "just as she was leaving."

"Leaving!" exclaimed Herrick, incredulously; "she surely cannot have gone without a word to me."

"She seemed in a hurry to get home. She came down with her hat on. I told her I would give orders for some one to drive her home; but she evidently preferred walking."

With an exclamation of annoyance, Herrick turned and left the room. The thing seemed to him easy enough to understand. Lois, in compliance with his wish that she should return to Summerhill that day, had come downstairs prepared to depart; and, on the look out for him, had been met by Lady Joan. Some cold and formal speech had scared the timid girl, and she had fled precipitately. Lady Joan's stately "I beg your pardon," had sufficed to put her to flight on a former occasion; most likely some equally trivial speech, spoken with equally frigid emphasis, had done the deed now. What a nervous, impulsive child she was! How marvellous it seemed that his mother's heart had not opened towards her, and her strong nature yearned to protect her, as most strong natures yearn to protect the fragile and weak!

Sick at heart, and sick at brain, and though the muscles of his hand almost refused to guide his pen, he nevertheless sat down at once and despatched a few loving lines to Lois—a tender chiding for her hurried flight, a hint of his own weariness and sadness, and a promise that, when his week of dreary duties had come to an end, he would at once repair to Summerhill, for he had many things to talk over with her.

The "many things" to Herrick's mind represented Lois's resignation of her post in Mrs. Leyton's household, and the selection of a suitable home for her, in the house of some intimate friends of his own, until the wedding-day could be definitely fixed.

He did not expect a reply to this letter; for as yet he and Lois had not fallen into the habit—so dear to lovers—of making trifles an excuse for correspondence.

Before nightfall his vexation at Lois's abrupt departure had had to give way to other and more pressing claims upon his time and thought; for Lady Joan had

broken down utterly, and the arrangement of all matters, small and great, devolved upon him. Lady Joan was found by her maid lying upon her bed in a high state of fever, and half unconscious. Before evening delirium set in. Upon which, Parsons, the faithful old creature that she was, at once took possession of the sick-room, carefully keeping every one, except Dr. Scott, on the other side of the door.

"Poor soul, poor soul," said the doctor next morning to the old nurse. "It's only what one might expect. I suppose, last night, Parsons, she raved incessantly about her dead husband?"

"My lady's ravings," answered the discreet Parsons, "were mostly incoherent; and when she did say a word I could understand, it was not worth remembering."

And the shrewd look which she gave the doctor as she said this, might have been understood to mean:

"I know my place, Dr. Scott, and I know yours; and I don't intend to make my lady the talk of the town in order to gratify your curiosity."

## HOLLAND HOUSE.

A PLEASANT corner is that by Holland House, where the road to the west is bordered by lofty trees. The cab-stand is at the corner, where even cabbie seems to enjoy a leisured and lettered existence, with no anxieties about "fares," which are sure to come in due time, and with the daily journals to study meanwhile. Here must hackney coaches surely have stood in the old time, while the jarvie thumbed an odd copy of the "Spectator"—with Addison himself calling a coach, sometimes to take him off to "Buttons," or some other of his favourite haunts. Yet the trees are growing old; those solemn elms that could whisper, if they would, the histories of stirring times, and tell us secrets of grand and beautiful dames long turned to dust, are dying away at the top, although they still show a screen of golden leaves to the pale sunshine of autumn.

Where the solid brick wall of the park gives place to an open railing, are a pair of drinking fountains, dedicated to the memory of the Lord Holland of hospitable fame, where urchins loiter to drink, or porters rest with their burdens, or the cabman fills his teapot, while the poodle snatches a hasty quencher through the

bars of his muzzle from the tank beneath. And his lordship himself presides over this banquet of the Barmecides, sitting there in bronze, bare-headed under the drip of the trees, surrounded by fallen leaves that are thickly scattered over the turf grass, that grows thinly and rankly under the shade.

Above one of the fountains we read the following distich, which Lord Holland seems to have penned shortly before his death—an event which, according to the inscription on his statue, occurred in 1840.

Nephew of Fox and friend of Gay,  
Be this my deed to fame :  
That those who knew me best may say,  
He tarnished neither name.

The kindly old lord had known many whose names were still more famous than these. At his hospitable board had sat nearly all the choicest spirits of the age; but there is a touch of family pride and political loyalty in his last deliverance, that commands a certain sympathy.

From the top of one of many of the omnibuses that pass that way, one may catch a glimpse, before the leaves of summer are thick upon the trees, of the gables and turrets of old Holland House. And it still wears an aspect of seclusion, although surrounded by the tall houses of a fashionable and artistic quarter. And a somewhat better view of the place may be had from a side walk dedicated to the public, which bears the name of Holland Walk. The lane affords a pleasant shaded walk, a favourite resort of children and nursemaids in the summer time, with seats here and there. And in autumn, with the tinge of russet and gold in the dying leaves, the quiet sunshine steals among leafy glades and rests upon the heavy, stately mass of the ancient mansion, bringing out the deep-toned hues of its weathered brickwork, and casting deep shadows of its quaint turrets with their pyramidal roofs.

The general appearance of the house suggests reminiscences of Hatfield. The two houses are of the same period, and the builders of them were in alliance; in such alliance anyhow as lion and jackal, for such must have been the relation between the Lord of Hatfield, that Robert Cecil, who for a time had the destinies of England in his grasp, and Watty Cope, as he was known to his familiars, who was but a subordinate official of the privy chamber. Walter Cope, of the Strand, Esq., as he appears first upon the stage, had contrived by gift or purchase, to piece together the long divided Manor of

Kensington. The Abbot of Abingdon's share had fallen to the Crown after the Reformation, and Walter got a grant of that from Queen Elizabeth. Then there was the Manor of West Town, with an old moated house on the hill, and the district known as Earl's Court. And Cope, flourishing more luxuriantly under James than under the penurious and exacting Elizabeth, began, in 1607, to build this noble mansion. And it was first known, slightly in mockery of its owner's rising pretensions, as Cope Castle. An old friend visiting him soon after his housewarming, writes to Dudley Carleton: "July the seventh, 1608, went with Lady Fanshaw to visit Cope Castle, Kensington. Sir Walter Cope grows more and more into the great lord." He was now Chamberlain of the Exchequer, and fattening on the forfeited lands of recusants. But he was not destined to found a family. His fine house and grand fortune were settled upon his daughter Isabella, who married Henry Rich, presently Earl of Holland, at the church of St. Bartholomew the Great, in Smithfield.

The Rich family, too, had come to fortune based on the misfortunes of others. Chancellor Rich, the founder of the family, had, as the King's Attorney, hounded to destruction the venerable martyrs, Bishop Fox and Sir Thomas More. The Chancellor's fortune had been built up of forfeitures and confiscations. His descendants were brilliant courtiers and men of the world who followed the fortunes of the rising star, the brilliant Buckingham; and were rewarded with lavish hand by the great favourite. One brother was created Earl of Holland, taking his title from that little Holland in Lincolnshire, which, with its drains and great sea-banks, rivals the greater Holland on the other side of the North Sea. Another brother received the proud title of Warwick, once made illustrious by Nevilles and Dudleys, a title that eventually descended to the heirs of the Earl of Holland.

Where Walter Cope had built, Henry Rich embellished and enlarged, and Cope Castle was henceforth known as Holland House. The Earl's handsome person and graceful manners brought him into favour at Court; he was one of the envoys charged to negotiate the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria of France; and he was ever after the Queen's devoted follower, and the chief personage in her household. In Henrietta's honour the

Earl proposed to give a grand entertainment in Holland House, at which both King and Queen were to be present. And for this event the house was re-decorated and furnished, and the great gilt-room, as it is called, adorned with extraordinary magnificence. But Charles had come to dislike and mistrust his wife's brilliant favourite, and the promised visit was never paid. The stress of civil war found out the weakness of the Earl's character. He vacillated between the two parties, and finally lost his head on the scaffold for an abortive rising against the ruling power of Cromwell and the army.

It is the ghost of Henry Rich that, according to tradition, haunts the rooms which he had prepared for the entertainment of his Royal mistress. He is richly dressed, as he appeared on the scaffold, but bears in his hands his own head, with the long lovelocks matted with blood.

After the Earl's execution, Holland House became for a time the rendezvous of Cromwell, Fairfax, and the other chiefs of the army of the Commonwealth. According to tradition, an important interview between Cromwell and Ireton took place on the lawn in front of the house—for Ireton was deaf, and within four walls there was no security against eavesdroppers. But on the open lawn, where none could approach without discovery, Cromwell could speak his mind, in such loud tones as were necessary.

Before long, however, the widowed Countess, who had many influential friends among the victorious faction, was permitted to return to Holland House. And here it is said that the proscribed drama found a refuge during the severities of the Cromwellian reign. The poor, frozen-out actors—suffering under the Puritan black-frost of the times—found a patroness in the kindly Countess, and dramatic performances were given with as much secrecy, and as many precautions as attended the holding of a conventicle in other days.

At the Restoration, the young Earl of Holland came to his own again, and soon after—by the death of his uncle—inherited the more famous title of Earl of Warwick. His son and successor is chiefly noticeable as having left a widow, who, taking counsel as to the education of her only son from the famous Mr. Joseph Addison, of the "Spectator," eventually married her sage adviser. Soon after, Addison becomes Secretary of State and Right Honourable;

but probably he was not very easy as the master of Holland House, or, rather, as the husband of its mistress. For the Countess had a shrewish tongue; and, probably, Addison's happiest hours were those he spent among his old friends of the literary persuasion, where he could forget the chains of his splendid bondage. But the room is still shown, which was the library in those days, where Addison meditated a forthcoming "Spectator," pacing to and fro, with a bottle of wine at each end of the room to stimulate his imagination.

But Addison's lease of the splendours of Holland House was only a short one; and soon we find him stretched on the bed of death, but didactic to the last, and sending for his noble stepson to witness "how a Christian can die." The stepson, however, took little by the lesson, and was noted for nothing but a certain sottishness. At his death the honours of the family became extinct, and the estates were bequeathed to a certain Welsh cousin of his mother's, who was the daughter of Sir Thomas Myddleton, of Chirk Castle, one William Edwardes, who was created Baron Kensington on the strength of his acquisition. But my Lord Kensington did not care to live in the fine old house, and sold it to Henry Fox, who was then paymaster-general of the forces—the most lucrative office under the Crown—and the leader of the House of Commons under Earl Bute.

Henry Fox was the son of an old courtier and cannie official, Sir Stephen Fox. And Stephen is said to have been an eye-witness of the execution of Charles the First; and he might very well have been, as a youth of seventeen or eighteen years of age. At all events, he was of humble origin, from Dorsetshire; but taking service with the exiled Charles the Second, he proved himself such an excellent manager of that Prince's tattered finances, that at the Restoration he was promoted to the office of paymaster of the land forces. At the age of seventy-five he married for the last time, and became the father of three sons. Henry Fox was one of the three. And in this way we have the extraordinary spectacle of the lives of father and son, covering the wide period from the reign of King Charles the First to that of King George the Third.

The paymaster of the forces resembled rather one of the old French surintendants, such as Fouquet, than a modern English minister. He had the control of millions

without any effective check or audit. Henry spent his millions judiciously in securing a majority in a venal House of Commons; and for this feat he was rewarded by being created Lord Holland.

"Ah," said the sighing Peer, "had Bute been true, I would have been Earl instead of Baron," for such had been the bargain, according to Fox's account of the matter. Few men were better liked, or worse hated, than Henry Fox, who was possessed of a marvellous personal influence, a wonderful charm that won people over in spite of better judgement. In mature years he won the affections of the daughter of the Duke of Richmond, a nobleman prouder of his somewhat tarnished descent from the Royal line, than a Valois or a Bourbon could be. The mésalliance was not to be thought of. Holland was next in descent to a shoe-black. Perhaps the Duke exaggerated a little in his rage. But Lady Georgina remained faithful to her middle-aged Adonis. She would look at no one else in the way of a lover, and when commanded by her father to appear at some assembly to meet a pretendant for her hand, she cut off her eyebrows—it was said the Lennoxes had them uncommonly dark and thick—and made herself such a fright, that she was sent back to her chamber again in penance. Then there was a rope-ladder at the window, or something equivalent, and Lady Georgina and her lover were married by a Fleet parson.

When a son was born to the runaway pair, the Duke relented and forgave them; and thereafter there were gay doings at Holland House. Lord Holland was a most genial father, and quite superior to the illiberal prejudices of the age as to family discipline. That children should never be thwarted in anything, was one of his leading principles; and, on the whole, it answered better than might have been expected. The second son, Charles James Fox, the "Fox" par excellence of the drinking-fountain inscription, inherited his father's wondrous charm. We see him, a dark-haired clever-looking boy in Reynolds' famous picture, one of the chief art treasures of Holland House. His youthful aunt, "lovely black-haired Sarah Lennox," looks down from a window in Holland House with that arch, winning glance of hers, upon her nephew and playmate, Charles James, and upon another fair girl, her cousin, Lady Susan Fox Strange-

ways, who holds in her arms a pet dove. It is curious, by the way, in respect of this picture, to note how easily experienced observers may be a little bit out when they describe from memory. Leigh Hunt writes: "Lady Sarah stands below with a dove in her hand, while Lady Strangeways looks out of the window." Thackeray says: "A canvas worthy of Titian. She, Sarah, looks from the Castle window, holding a bird in her hand, at black-eyed young Charles Fox, her nephew." Thackeray being right in essence, but wrong as to the bird. By the way, Thackeray seems to have got a hint from this picture, or the family history connected with it. The girl with the dove afterwards contracted what was then thought a "dreadful low marriage" with O'Brien, an actor, and the pair were shipped off to the Colonies, just like Lady Maria and her actor in Thackeray's novel.

But Lady Sarah, after all, is the heroine of Sir Joshua's piece. Who does not remember her story, how George, the farmer's boy, fell in love with her, and ogled her silently; only, instead of being the farmer's boy, it was Georgius Rex, of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. That black-eyed damsel might have been a Queen. It was quite on the cards as she made hay upon the lawn in front of Holland House in the most charming rustic costume, and George rode by upon the tall horse, and looked and sighed. What a difference it might have made perhaps. A bright and clever woman as a wife might have been the making of George, and have saved him from that dogged obstinacy which brought such woes unnumbered upon the hapless land. And everybody knows the story of the Royal wedding when George married homely Charlotte. How the Archbishop read out the passage in the marriage-service which speaks of the blessing vouchsafed to Abraham and Sarah; and the King winced and cast one last look at Sarah herself, who stood there in her loveliness among the bridal train.

But Sarah herself did not take the matter much to heart, and was gay enough afterwards as the wife of a sensible Suffolk baronet. And ever young as she appears for us in Reynolds' canvas, it is difficult to think of her as a grandmother with those sturdy boys, the Napiers, at her knees.

But at Holland House all was bright and joyous for Lady Sarah and the young



people, who were allowed to do whatever they pleased, and took full advantage of these opportunities. Horace Walpole tells us something of the gay doings there, and of the private theatricals in which Lady Sarah and Charles James took part. A pleasant story is told of father and son, the former having promised that Charles should be present at the blowing up with gunpowder of an old wall that interrupted the view from one of the windows of Holland House. But by some misunderstanding the operation was successfully performed while Master Charles was away. On his return he did not fail to cry out against the breach of faith. Lord Holland acknowledged the justice of the reproach. He ordered the wall to be re-built precisely as it had previously stood, and then it was blown up again, to the lively satisfaction of Master Fox.

The death of the first Lord Holland brought this brilliant period for Holland House to an end. The eldest son of the house died soon after his father, and the son's son, an infant of a year old, became Lord Holland, and the owner of Holland House. Charles James Fox was his nephew's guardian, and well discharged his trust. An inveterate gambler, a mighty drinker, crippled with debts, and the most improvident of men; yet with a noble and lofty soul, he rose above all his infirmities. As his nephew grew up, he introduced him to the society of the most distinguished people of the day. And as soon as Lord Holland came of age, he began to make Holland House a rendezvous for the leading spirits in politics—of course on the Whig side—and in literature. Fox's room and Sheridan's room are still honourably distinguished at Holland House. The latter was a constant guest, and a little story is told about him, which suggests a doubt whether Lord Holland's cellar was altogether worthy of his reputation as *Mæcenæ*. Opposite the house, but within the limits of Kensington High Street stood, and still stands, a tavern known as the "Adam and Eve." It has recently been re-built and modernised, but not long ago it presented a quaint, old-fashioned appearance, which carried it back to the date of the Regency. In leaving Holland House, Sheridan invariably called for a dram at the "Adam and Eve," and as regularly "chalked it up" to Lord Holland.

The landlord, proud of his distinguished guest, did not trouble his lordship about

the matter till several years had elapsed, and the score had reached a somewhat heavy amount, which Lord Holland discharged with a wry face.

But Holland House would have been nothing without its mistress. But in following the advice, "take a wife," Lord Holland took somebody else's wife. There was the usual scandal and divorce suit, and then Lady Webster became legally Lady Holland. She was a Miss Vassal, and had a fine fortune of her own, and a handsome person. Banished from Court, Lady Holland held a kind of court of her own at Holland House.

All the poets, wits, and statesmen—of the Whig persuasion—paid homage to Lady Holland, while her husband bustled about and blew the fanfare assiduously. Yet great things were done at Holland House—reforms planned and accomplished, literary lions fed with appreciation and encouragement. All the great names of that brilliant period may be found on the lists of the Holland House entertainments. These lasted well into the present reign. And it is a curious fact that a biographer, taking up the lives of the three Foxes—Sir Stephen, his son Henry, and Henry's grandson, the third lord—would carry his reader consecutively through the reign of Charles the First, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the "glories" of 1688, the reign of Queen Anne and the four Georges; and also through the short reign of William the Fourth, to the earlier part of the long reign of her present Majesty.

During such a long and eventful period, all kinds of relics, and curios, and works of art have become family possessions, and have been stored in Holland House, and there accumulated undisturbed. When Lord Holland died in 1840, Holland House suffered an eclipse. His son and successor, the fourth Lord Holland, was a diplomatist, and resided chiefly abroad, and the traditions of Holland House were almost forgotten when the widow of the last lord came back, and at intervals gathered together some of the celebrities of recent days. The last of these gatherings, which brought down as it were a faint echo of the old glories of Holland House, took place in the jubilee year of grace. And now Lady Holland is gone, and the last link is severed of the long chain. And what will become of Holland House and its grounds, that still show a little of the wilderness of ancient forest among the genteel villas and elaborate newly old-

fashioned dwellings of Kensington? Who can tell!

But there is nothing like Holland House anywhere near London; it is the last survivor of its age—a solitary example of an epoch of domestic architecture. Happily it has not fallen into the hands of strangers, but has come into possession of a nobleman who represents an elder branch of the family of Fox; and it is to be hoped that the totem of the family, which occupies the place of honour on the park wall, may long remain there, in evidence of the inviolate existence of the house which has so long been the home of the race.

### CONCERNING PEAKS.

By a peak I do not mean the fore part of a jockey's cap or a soldier's helmet, nor even the becoming point which terminates the front of a lady's bodice, about both which articles of dress a lengthy essay might be written; but I do mean those upstart portions of the terrestrial crust which give themselves airs—often, plenty of them—and, from their lofty eminence, look down haughtily upon all around them, although they be themselves wearing, in penitential guise, dust and ashes on their brow.

Warm-hearted, indeed, they frequently are; still, they pour down good and evil on their neighbours with stoical and stony indifference; and, though they stand as firm as a rock, they are nevertheless liable to the ups and downs to which all things geological are subject.

Without going far abroad, we ourselves possess, in Derbyshire, a famous Peak the foot of which is more curious than its head, and its entrails more interesting than its outward aspect. Its altitude does not appear so great as it is, because it rises from an inland station; but its internal conformation is marvellous. It loses much in dignity by not having been planted on the coast.

Of peaks which do rise directly from the sea, that Teneriffe is the loftiest in the world is a fact of which geographers are not ignorant; but the physical consequences of that fact are less familiar to people in general—even, perhaps, to the health-seekers staying at the Orotava or the Icod hotels, who have the phenomenon within easy reach, or spread out before them, if they had but the eyes, or the

instruments and the skill to use them, to convince them of its actual existence.

Most of us suppose the surface of seas and oceans to lie at a dead level—that is, uniformly following the curvature of the earth's surface—throughout, or throughout the terrestrial globe, a due average allowance of course being made for tides and waves. Monsieur Bouquet de la Grye has shown that such is not the case. The sea, like the plain, has its undulations of surface.

Some five years ago that gentleman was sent to Senegal and Teneriffe, to determine the geographical position of certain points. The recent establishment of a telegraphic cable between St. Louis (Senegal) and Santa-Cruz (Teneriffe) made it desirable to fix, with astronomical accuracy, the position of the capital of the French colony, because it would have to serve as the fundamental meridian for the basins of the Senegal and the Upper Niger.

The details of this delicate astronomical task are not likely to interest unprofessional or unscientific readers, except to note that, at the present day, observers are expected to attain—and they do succeed in attaining—a precision which would have filled the old geographers with stupefaction.

From the time of Ptolemy to the seventeenth century, errors of one or two degrees of longitude were regarded as a matter of course. Forty years ago, the tenth of a degree, or six minutes, was a difference which had often to be corrected on maps. Twenty years ago that figure was reduced by one-half, where certain fundamental meridians were defined. At present, when two stations are connected by a telegraphic wire or cable, the errors tolerated ought to be inferior to a half-tenth of a second, that is six thousand times less than the errors contemporary with great geographical discoveries.

This measurement of infinitely small portions of time is obtained, with science transformed into patience, by repeating the trial proofs indefinitely, and especially by analysing and allowing for what are called "personal equations"—physiological quantities dependent on the observer's acuteness of hearing, sight, and touch—three senses which contribute, each their share, in taking observations. Nevertheless, the first of the three is on the point of being dispensed with.

Le Verrier's question, put to candidates who offered to serve under his orders:

"Are you a musician?" to which the obligatory answer was "Yes," is at present needless and out of place. In observatories, now, instead of listening to the harmony of the starry spheres, astronomers will give "tops" on a chronograph.

On returning to Teneriffe, Monsieur de la Grye, having a week to spare before the starting of the mail-boat for Cadiz, thought he could not employ it better than by ascending the Peak, in order to measure the density of the mountain. One of the results may at once be given. It was proved that the sea which bathes the Canaries' Archipelago has a strangely undulated surface; and that, by the effect of attraction, its level rises to a considerable height round Teneriffe, greatly exaggerating an effect similar to that which capillarity produces round a tube plunged into a glass of water.

In this way the surface of the sea forms an inclined plane, sloping down from the base of the mountain outwards to the distance, at which the attraction of the mass becomes so feeble as no longer to exert any perceptible influence.

It might be supposed that a floating body, such as a boat or a ship, would naturally slide down this inclined plane, like a ball rolling from the top to the bottom of a hill, until it reached the normal level of the ocean; but it should be remembered that the same attraction which raises the waters, acts also with equal force on the floating body, so as to maintain it in position, just as if no inclination of the surface existed.

It would be interesting to ascertain whether seaside mountains of much smaller mass, like the Highlands in the West of Scotland, or the Archipelago of the Scillies, exercise any perceptible attraction on the waters bathing the foot of the chain, or surrounding the group of islands. For the same physical reason, a long lake with big mountains at one end and a dead plain at the other, ought, in calm weather, to have the water at the mountainous end slightly higher than that bordered by the plain, and to continue so upraised in stable equilibrium.

It has been shown that the surface of the Lake of Geneva, and of course of other equally large or larger lakes, follows the curvature of the terrestrial globe. In this, indeed, it only follows, on a small scale, what necessarily occurs on the ocean itself.

When Monsieur de la Grye informed the

Consul of France that, in order to complete his observations effectually, it would be needful to pass several nights aloft on the Peak, he was advised not to breathe a word of the project. Not a creature would consent to accompany him if it were known that he was going to encamp in the region of the "fumerolles," or, smoke-vents. The *isleños* who mount the Peak in summer, in search of snow, sulphur, and pumice-stone, would refuse to follow; so afraid are they of the squalls and gusts of wind which sweep people away like feathers, and certainly still more of the volcano itself, which, according to the Guanchos legends, was an infernal divinity who is not to be braved with impunity.

With the Consul's assistance, a small caravan of eight persons was got together, and they started early from Orotava, with favourable auspices as to weather. As long as they remained in the cultivated region, the morning mist was laden with the strong odour of toasted bread, which is the characteristic of the island. In every cottage, wheat, previously roasted on an iron plate, is crushed in a small hand-mill, and the resulting brown powder, "goffio," is the basis of the *isleños'* aliment.

Each guide had hung at his side a leather bag full of this roasted flour, which, in principle, at least, was to serve as his only nourishment during the whole time of the excursion. It is related that, during the Franco-Spanish war at the beginning of the century, a Canarian regiment landed at Cadiz, who had to traverse the peninsula from south to north, had no need to draw on the commissariat during the whole journey. The soldiers performed marches of eighteen leagues at a stretch, requiring no other support than the goffio brought with them; and not a single laggard was left behind.

Many peaks, like Teneriffe, are the chimney-tops or outlets of volcanoes, more or less active, more or less dormant, sometimes believed to be extinct; but their absolute extinction can seldom be depended on sufficiently to justify building an hotel or an observatory on their top, like those on the Niesen and Mount Pilatus in Switzerland, on Ben Nevis in Scotland, and on the Pic du Midi de Bigorre in the Pyrenees. As we are told to beware of a sleeping dog, so should we be cautious about contracting too intimate an acquaintance with a slumbering volcanic peak,

for it often sleeps with one eye, or just one little crater open. Ev'n in its ashes live its wonted fires. Its intervals of rest are provokingly irregular and intermittent.

In times past, Vesuvius kept quiet, perhaps for ages; and now its outbreaks are so frequent that every tourist in Italy complains if he fails to witness an eruption, or to feel the mild shock of a diluted earthquake. With all these drawbacks, as Vesuvian wines are good, Vesuvian vineyards are a valuable property; but fancy being the tenant—for life, or death!—of a fine estate on the sunny slopes of Krakatoa!

These semi-dormant peaks can boast of one useful qualification; namely, to fulfil the functions of a cooking stove. They can mostly boil, can sometimes bake, but less frequently roast safely or satisfactorily. The meat might contract a taste of sulphur, which, although its medicinal virtues—in brimstone and treacle—are acknowledged, would be less acceptable by epicures as a condiment. Teneriffe cooks eggs to a nicety. That, however, is only a trifle, and is greatly surpassed by other fire-warmed islands.

When the French mission, headed by Admiral Mouchez, went to observe the transit of Venus, on the little islet of Saint Paul, in the Southern Hemisphere, they found it to be the crater of a by no means extinct volcano, rising from the bottom of the sea to the height of more than nine hundred feet above the level of the water. Although of so comparatively moderate an altitude, it is really and actually a partly submerged peak.

It is an absolutely sterile rock, not habitable, without potable water or vegetation, except a sort of tough, leathery grass, frequented solely by flocks of seals, sea-birds, and penguins, whose eggs might be hatched by the warmth of the soil, if the uppermost faces of the cliffs were not selected as their breeding places. The penguins themselves are so familiar and fearless, that, in order to pass through their crowded groups without crushing them, the astronomers had to push them aside with feet and hands. They allowed themselves to be taken up and caressed, resuming their usual occupations immediately afterwards, as if the only event that had happened was the arrival of a few more penguins on the island.

Down below, at the foot of the crater's circumference, were numerous springs of thermal water hot enough to cook, in the

usually required time, the lobsters which were caught in extreme abundance amongst all the surrounding rocks. In many places about their huts and sheds, the soil was burning hot at a few inches depth; and on digging down to a couple of yards, as much as two hundred degrees centigrade of heat—twice as hot as boiling water—was found, thereby supplying the party with an easy means of warming themselves, and cooking their food, if combustibles should happen to fail.

Amidst a cluster of peaks—the mountains of Gomera, an island lying close to the south-west of Teneriffe—are to be heard what may be called prehistoric or fossil sounds, a survival or remnant of the Guancho's vocal powers. Occasionally, they startle the ear on Teneriffe itself.

The Feast of Saint Anthony, at which domestic animals are blessed, is celebrated in the small village of San Antonio, not far distant from the now well-known valley of Orotava. Here is a little hill-side chapel, containing what is supposed to be a peculiarly sacred image, with such miraculous powers that all animals brought before it, when blessed on this day, are preserved from evil during the coming year.

Before the blessing of the animals commences, the little image of the saint, under a flower-decked canopy, is carried round the chapel in procession. At the door, the procession stops; the image is thrice inclined towards the people; and the blessing of Saint Anthony is read from a great book by the priest. This ceremony is performed three times. At the conclusion of each blessing, the men raise a curious wild cry, almost like that of sea-birds, believed to be derived from the ancient inhabitants of Gomera, the said Guanchos.

On this subject, Monsieur de la Groye directs attention to a custom which he thinks to be still "unpublished," and deserving to be studied. The shepherds of Gomera have a whistled language, also inherited from the Guanchos, the modulations of which represent ideas and articulations. The sounds they utter reach prodigious distances. General Carlos de Riveira, Commandant of the Archipelago, communicated facts, whose truth he had verified by making two Gomerians converse at a distance. He thinks that antiquaries and philosophers might advantageously study a language the origin of which, lost in the night of ages, has been



preserved on summits which may have once belonged to the antique Atlantis.

The General believed that no traveller had as yet made mention of this language, which will furnish hints to adepts of the new school of music styled "descriptive." Nevertheless, Berthencourt's chaplains, in their narrative, speak of the Gomerians' mode of talking, "practised with the lips," because they descend, it seems, from a race of men of which every individual member, made prisoners of war, had their tongues cut out.

Here we have a popular legend putting us on the track of truth. On the other hand, Spanish historians say that the shepherds conduct their flocks by whistling; moreover, they whistle so loudly, that an Englishman going close to them, in order to hear better, was deaf for a fortnight afterwards.

#### BUILDING CASTLES.

Building castles! April gleams  
Flickering round the fairy dreams,  
That fling a halo rare and rich  
Where, in fancy's fairest niche,  
Eager hands of happy youth  
Raise a shrine to Love and Truth.  
Not a cloudlet in the sky,  
Not a cold breeze rushing by;  
No touch of fear, no stain of guilt,  
In the castles that we built.

Building castles! August's sun  
Lit us ere our work was done;  
Glad and glorious in the strength  
That the noonday wins at length,  
When the fitful morning light  
Steadies in its perfect height;  
When the joyous hope is crowned;  
When the trust its rest has found;  
The full cup no drop had spilt  
In the castle that we built.

Building castles! Wind and snow  
Sweep the plains of long ago;  
Over many a tended grave  
Rise the fragments that we save  
From the ruins of the past,  
To raise the shrine that is our last;  
To guard kind memory's tender tear  
For the few that love us here.  
"Not as we will, but as Thou wilt,"  
For the last castle life has built.

#### THE GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC.

WITHIN eighty-five miles to the eastward of the coast of Nova Scotia, is a crescent-shaped, death-fraught island, which among Atlantic mariners is known and dreaded as the graveyard of North America. Statisticians have failed to record the sum-total of shipwreck and death for which this sand-bank is responsible;

but although countless disasters have passed unobserved and unrecorded, more than enough have been made known.

A sand-bank, we say, for such does Sable Island appear to one approaching it from the north. As he gets nearer, the sand-bank reveals itself as a collection of low sand-hills, partially covered with a scanty vegetation, rising gradually from the sea-level at the west side to an elevation of about eighty feet at the east end. The whole formation is crescent-shaped, and measures about twenty-two miles from point to point of the bow, but only about one mile in breadth at its widest.

This fatal sand-bow not only lies at the interlacing of three great currents, and midway between the coast of British North America and the Gulf Stream, but it lies directly in the pathway of Transatlantic commerce. It is enshrouded for weeks together in dense, impenetrable fogs, and it is surrounded by eddies and erratic currents; it is so low, that the mariner does not see it until he is upon it; and for centuries it has lured unnumbered ships and crews to their doom.

A few years ago a friend of the present writer's, Mr. S. D. Macdonald, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, prepared a wreck-chart of Sable Island, marking the place on it of every known wreck within living memory. The appalling number of one hundred and fifty-two wrecks were localised; but the process of compilation led to the conclusion that for every wreck whose history could be recorded, at least one more must be added as lost in the mystery of the tempest.

It is not the visible island alone which is to be dreaded. At the north-east end is a dry bar of two miles, a shallow bar of nine miles, and a deeper bar with a heavy cross-sea for four miles. At the north-west end is a more or less shallow bar of seventeen miles, over which, even in fine weather, the sea breaks heavily. There is thus, with the island, a continuous line of over fifty miles of foaming breakers—the most deadly spot on the face of the navigable waters.

When the storm breaks, it seems as if the whole body of the Atlantic were being discharged on this sand-bank with a force which shakes it to its centre. And scarcely a storm passes, but the anxious watchers for derelict mariners pick up on the surf-covered beach a broken spar, a bit of furniture, a hen-coop, or some other mute, pathetic evidence of disaster and death.

Sport of the tireless winds and seething currents, Sable Island is ever changing its configuration, and even its position. Let us take a look at its history and its physical peculiarities.

Three hundred and forty years ago, John and Sebastian Cabot, in their little ship "Matthew" from Bristol, coasted Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and sighted the sand hummocks of Sable Island. Cabot brought home such reports of waters teeming with fish, that expedition after expedition of Portuguese fishermen followed. Some of these adventurers must have landed on the island and left cattle, for which those who followed them had reason to be thankful.

Later on, in the sixteenth century, Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed over from England, with five armed ships, to St. John's; and, although he found there a considerable fleet of fishing-vessels of all nations, formally took possession of Newfoundland in the name of Queen Elizabeth. Some of the Portuguese there told him about Sable Island, and thither he sailed, as thus recorded in the chronicle of the voyage:

"Sable lieth to the seaward of Cape Breton about forty-five degrees, whither we were determined to go upon intelligence we had of a Portingall during our abode in St. John's, who was also himself present when the Portingalls, about thirty years past, did put into the same island both neat and swine to breed, which were since exceedingly multiplied. The distance between Cape Race and Cape Breton is one hundred leagues, in which navigation we spent eight days, having the wind many times indifferently good, but could never obtain sight of any land all that time, seeing we were hindered by the current. At last, we fell into such flats and dangers, that hardly any of us escaped; where, nevertheless, we lost our 'Admiral' with all the men and provisions. Contrary to the mind of the expert Master Cox, on Wednesday, twenty-seventh of August, we bore up toward the land; those in the doomed ship continually sounding trumpets and drums; whilst strange voices from the deep scared the helmsman from his post on board the frigate. Thursday the twenty-eighth, the wind arose and blew vehemently from the south and east—bringing withal rain and thick mist; and we could not see a cable length before us. And betimes we were run and foulded amongst

flats and sand, amongst which we found flats and deeps every three or four ships' lengths. Immediately tokens were given to the 'Admiral' to cast about to seaward, which being the greater ship, and of burden one hundred and twenty tons, was performest upon the beach. Keeping so ill a watch, they knew not the danger before they felt the same too late to recover, for presently the 'Admiral' struck aground, and had soon her stern and hinder parts beaten in pieces. The remaining two ships escaped, by casting about east-south-east, bearing to the south for their lives, even in the wind's eye. Sounding on while seven fathoms, then five, then again deeper; the sea going mightily and high."

Such was the first recorded wreck on Sable Island. Only twelve out of the crew of one hundred and seven escaped; and, afterwards reaching Nova Scotia, were taken by a French vessel to England.

The next we read of Sable Island in history is in connection with the French attempt to colonise North America. In 1598, the Marquis de la Roche obtained a Charter from Henry the Third, and set sail for "New France," taking with him forty convicts from the French prisons. When he arrived off the Nova Scotia coast he began to be a little uneasy about these passengers, and landed them for safety on Sable Island, until he could organise a settlement on the mainland. On his way back to the island, he encountered a furious gale, before which he was driven for fifteen days, until he found himself back on the French coast again. For some reason or other—some say that the Marquis was captured by an enemy, and not allowed to communicate the result of his voyage to the King—Henry did not hear for five years that forty poor wretches had been left to starve on an ocean sand-heap. He at once ordered out a ship to their relief, and when the expedition reached Sable Island, only twelve of the forty remained alive. Many had fallen in the general scramble for existence, when the men found themselves deserted and became enraged with each other as well as with those who had left them in such a plight. Others had died of exposure and privation. The remainder had managed to erect huts out of the wreck of a Spanish vessel, and lived on the raw flesh of the cattle which the Portuguese had placed on the island. When their clothes were worn out, they dressed themselves in the skins of seals,

an immense number of which they had accumulated, and took back to France with them.

In after years some of these unfortunate castaways actually made their way back to their island prison, tempted by the knowledge they had gained of the facilities it presented for seal-hunting.

The next definite record is of one John Ross, a mariner of Boston, U.S., whose ship the "Mary and Jane," was driven ashore here. For three months he was left on the island, and in that time built for himself a boat out of the wreck of his ship, in which he managed to reach the mainland. He reported the existence of eight hundred head of wild cattle, and many black foxes, and his reports induced both the Nova Scotians and the New Englanders to seek a hunting-ground on the island. A company was formed in Boston for the enterprise; but when they reached Sable Island they found that the Frenchmen, who had come back, had built houses and a fort, and had killed off all but a hundred or two of the cattle.

Thereafter Sable Island remained the resort of adventurous fishermen and seal and walrus-hunters; as also of many with less lawful occupations. Awful tales used to be told in Nova Scotia of pirates, and smugglers, and ragamuffins of all sorts, who found temporary refuge on Sable Island, which was beyond the arm of authority.

The tales of piracy, wrecking, and murder became so common, that the Colonial Government were at last moved to do something.

What brought matters to a climax was the loss of the "Princess Amelia," a transport carrying all the household effects of the Duke of Kent, and about two hundred officers and recruits. Every soul on board perished; but there was a strong suspicion that many of them actually reached the shore alive, and were murdered by the pirates. A gun-boat called the "Harriet" was despatched to investigate matters; but she also was wrecked.

At last a proclamation was issued, declaring that all persons found on the island without a license from the Government would be removed and imprisoned for not less than six years; and at the same time a grant was voted for the establishment of a life-saving station. This was founded in 1802, under the superintendence of James Morris.

As Sable Island is now entirely given

over to the life-saving establishment, we must describe this useful organisation.

This Government establishment consists of a Superintendent and eighteen men, who are placed at various parts of the island. There is a main station about the centre, and there are five out-stations, in which the men reside. Besides these houses there are two houses of refuge, in which are fireplaces always ready filled with wood, candles, and matches, a bucket, and a bag of biscuits hung on the wall out of reach of the rats. The doors of these refuges are simply latched, and inside are written directions posted up, telling castaways how to obtain fresh water by digging in the sand, and how to make their way to the inhabited stations. Many a heartfelt prayer has been offered up in these shanties by storm-drenched mariners cast up by the sea on the island.

At all the out-stations there are signal-staffs, for the purpose of communicating with vessels, and also with the main station; and at the main station is a "crow's nest" on a mast one hundred and twenty feet high, from which a view of the entire island can be obtained—when fog permits. During the fogs, however—which are constant—patrols make the rounds of the whole shores once in every twenty-four hours.

There are several metallic life-boats, surf-boats, life-buoys, rockets and mortars at the different stations, and a supply of horses is always kept on hand to drag the boats and appliances to wherever they may be needed.

The life of the surf-men, we are told by Mr. Macdonald, is by no means an idle, although a somewhat monotonous, one. In fine weather they employ themselves in repairing the stations, hauling firewood, attending to the cattle, practising rocket and mortar drill, and in preparing the shipment of wreck-material for the next call of the Government steamer.

In foggy weather they are constantly on the alert. The patrol mounts his pony, and often in the teeth of a blast that nearly sweeps him off the saddle, or amid blinding showers of snow and sleet, or of sand-drift that cuts the face with furious force, he struggles on, now and again seeking shelter between the sand-hills, now and again mounting the crest of one to gaze to seaward, anon travelling down to the beach to examine some spar or other flotsam he espies there; but always steadily working on until he meets the next patrol

from the opposite direction. They exchange notes, compare observations, and work their way back again to the station from which each started. Thus not a day now passes but the area of the desolate sand-heap is thoroughly examined, and the ocean scanned for leagues around. In 1873 two lighthouses were erected, one at each end of the island. But some people think these lights a mistake, and that they deceive more than they warn vessels caught in the encircling currents.

It is to these currents that the dangerous disturbances, of which Sable Island is the centre, are due. The Gulf Stream, after sweeping between the coast of Florida and the islands of Cuba and the Bahamas, runs northward along the American coast until it reaches the shoals of Nantucket, when it swerves off to the north-east, and passing to the south of Sable Island, stretches across the Atlantic eastward to Europe. The cold, ice-laden current of the north passes out of the Arctic Ocean, along the east coast of Greenland, and there joining with another current from Baffin's Bay, sweeps along by the coasts of Labrador to the banks of Newfoundland. There it meets the north edge of the Gulf Stream and splits into two. One part, from its greater density, sinks below the warm current of the Gulf Stream, and continues its southward course as a submarine current. The other portion, after striking the Gulf Stream, turns off to the west and sweeps along the coast and bays of the northern continent. This is the current which mariners dread, and which in the neighbourhood of Sable Island runs at such a rate as to carry them out of their reckoning before they are aware. Then there is a third current, which, detaching from the Polar Stream at the south end of Labrador, rushes through the Straits of Belle Isle, joins the outflow of the St. Lawrence, and becomes the Gulf of St. Lawrence current. This third current skirts the east side of Cape Breton, and, passing south, strikes the westward-flowing portion of the Great Polar current in the neighbourhood of Sable Island.

There is this sand-heap in the midst of a swirl of waters, which, as they are affected by the prevailing winds, will put a ship all round the compass in twenty-four hours.

A curious illustration was found by one of the Superintendents, who one year had his provisions devoured by the rats, and

had seen large masses of the island washed away. He became alarmed for the safety of his company before the arrival of the relief-ship in the spring, and thought to despatch a message to the mainland for help. A small boat was put together, and letters being put on board, the sail was hoisted, and she was despatched before a south-east gale in the hope that she would either be picked up by some inbound vessel, or be blown on to the mainland. Thirteen days later the boat floated right on to the beach just six miles from the place from which she had been despatched!

In calm weather an empty barrel will circle round the island again and again; and, indeed, one is often sent adrift on this journey for the purpose of testing the velocity of the currents. Bodies from wrecks will also make the same ghastly circuit in full view of the watchers, who, when the wind is off-shore, will go to the opposite side from that on which the wreck occurred, in order to receive the sea-tribute.

The island is treeless, and the vegetation is confined to the central valley, so that there is nothing but the lighthouses to distinguish it from the surrounding sea. Even the colour is much like that of the ocean itself on a cold, grey day; and ships have been known in dirty weather, and before a stiff breeze, to run straight for the island, unaware of its proximity and their own danger until the red ensign on the flagstaff was sighted. Dense fogs accompany nearly all the winds all the year round, caused by the warm, moist air above the Gulf Stream meeting the cold air above the Polar Stream.

There have been, says our informant, some memorable tempests here which have marked periods in the history of the island—nights of terror never to be forgotten. The inhabitants of this lonely sand-bar have sometimes despaired of ever seeing the dawn again, and have sat for hours, speechless, terror-stricken, listening to the howling blast which threatened to hurl their dwellings into the angry waters.

After one such occasion they were horrified, on going forth again, to find that not only had the whole surface of the island been altered by the removal of some sand-hills and the formation of others, but also that a portion, about three miles long, forty feet wide, and from twenty to sixty feet high, had been cut off bodily from the north end. This forms now one of the parallel bars over which the seas break in



frightful tumult during those awful storms, the suddenness and violence of which are phenomenal.

Perhaps one morning the sun rises clear, with every indication of continued good weather, and with no premonition of coming woe, beyond the moan of the surf along the shore. All at once a dull leaden haze obscures the sun; the clouds gather fast; the sky becomes wild and unsettled looking; the wind begins to rise in fitful gusts, driving the sand in blinding swirls. Darkness increases as the low driving scud shuts off the horizon, and then the gale bursts with awful fury, cutting off the summits of the sand-hills as with a knife, and wrapping the island in a cloud of sand and spray. As night comes on the horror increases. The rain comes down in a deluge, and amid the roar of the elements the human voice is inaudible. The lightning for a moment lights up the waves as they madden along the beach; and then follows a sudden, strange calm. A pause—a few short gusts at brief intervals—and then the storm bursts forth anew from the opposite direction. For hours the hurricane continues, overborne in noise only by the crashing of the thunder; and then, as it gradually ceases, the clouds break away in dense black masses to leeward.

On one such night in 1811, thousands of tons of sand were carried up from the beach, first from one side and then the other, and strewn over the island, so that the vegetation was covered, and the outline of the island completely changed. Sand-hills were tumbled into the sea, and new hills piled up where before had been valleys; known wrecks disappeared, and the skeletons of others appeared above the sand—relics long buried of which there is no history.

When Sable Island was first occupied by the French convicts, it was about eighty miles long, by ten miles broad; it had a height of not less than three hundred feet; and it had an extensive harbour, a northern entrance and a safe approach. Even fifty years ago there was a commodious harbour to which fishing-vessels used to run for shelter, when caught on "the banks" in a storm. The entrance to this harbour was closed during a gale in 1836, and two American ships were shut in, whose ribs are now buried in the sands. A shallow lagoon now occupies the place of the old harbour, separated from the ocean by only a narrow ridge of sand. Meanwhile, the station, erected first in 1802, has

had to be repeatedly moved further and further inland.

In 1833, there was but half a mile left between the station and the sea. It was moved four miles inward, but the sea followed; and new buildings had to be erected about the centre of the island. At that time it was computed that eleven miles of the west end had been swept away in thirty years. In 1881, about one hundred and fifty feet of the whole breadth of the island was carried away; and the place where the lighthouse then stood is now covered with water. Instead of forty, the island is now only twenty-two miles long; instead of two and a half miles, it is only one mile broad; instead of three hundred feet, it is now only eighty feet high at its highest part.

Not only is it diminishing in size, but it is also actually travelling eastward at a rate which confuses the chart-makers. Account for it as experts may, the fact remains that, since the beginning of the present century, there has been a change of not less than twenty-five miles in its position. Sir William Dawson's theory is that the island is the summit of a vast submerged sand-bank, to the edge of which it is being gradually driven by the winds and currents, and that when it reaches the submarine edge, it will topple over bodily into deep water.

Meanwhile, with such characteristics as we have endeavoured to describe, can we wonder that Sable Island is one of the greatest terrors to those who go down to the sea in ships? A moving graveyard, acting in apparent fiendish collusion with the demons of the storms and currents, the most skilful seamanship is often unable to resist its deadly seductions.

Sable Island is not all a sandy waste. On the shores, it is true, nothing is to be seen but sand, thrown up in fantastic drifts, and scooped out into hollows, from which protrude the skeletons of many an unfortunate wreck. But as the hummocks are mounted, the scene changes. The lake-valley of the centre resembles a western prairie, with green knolls, and waving meadows of tall grass. On the shores of the lake, which extends for about eight miles, may be gathered in their season the wild pea, wild roses, lilies, asters, strawberries, blackberries, and cranberries. From these wild fruits a small revenue is derived by the men of the life-saving station, who gather and ship them to Nova Scotia. Here, also, are herds of

wild ponies dotting the hill-sides, while around a few fresh-water pools flocks of wild-duck and sheldrake paddle, and myriads of sea-birds circle in ceaseless flight.

It is in this little oasis that the Superintendent's house and stores are erected, and where the gardens and fields of the men are cultivated. It is a fair enough sight on a fine day, when, also, the seals are sunning themselves in thousands along the beaches. But how few are the fine days! Sometimes not half-a-dozen in as many months.

Sable Island is the home of ghosts. Not a spot of its area but is associated with human suffering and death; and, as if authentic tradition were not full enough, the supernatural fears of the seafarers have peopled it with legend and with spectre. It is, indeed, a weird spot, well adapted for the vagaries of unquiet spirits; but a regiment of them could hardly deepen the natural terrors.

## KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"  
"*A Faine Dameell*," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER L. WHAT COMPENSATION?

WHEN Mr. Kestell first left the drawing-room, he met Jones in the hall. This latter was placing a small lamp on the carved oak table, and the softened light shed a pleasant gleam on the tessellated pavement and over the old oak furniture. Rushbrook House was very perfect in all that related to its interior decoration; the harmony of colour always impressed newcomers, and prevented the wealth, that evidently reigned everywhere, from appearing in the least ostentatious.

Mr. Kestell, pausing as he watched Jones, with his usual precision, stooping to adjust the lamp, realised for a moment that, though he was the owner of all this, he was not part of it; that, for years, he had lived an outside life, and that, beautiful as this place was, he had been always forced to view it from the outside. This psychological truth—that a man may never really be able to make himself at home in the place where he lives, and of which he should by right be the keystone—belongs purely to the realm of that which we call spirit, or soul.

Kestell of Greystone, for reasons which he knew but too well, but which he never analysed, looked upon all his possessions with the eyes of a stranger. Yet he had spun the silken threads so closely around him that he was imprisoned in the cocoon, and knew that it was impossible for him to make his way out. He had the power, but not the will, to face the cold blast of the world which lay outside Rushbrook and all its possessions. But the longing to come out of it was always there, and with it the dread also of some rude hand piercing his cocoon and commanding him to come forth out of his silken chamber.

Mr. Kestell, pausing in his own hall, could not so much as lift up his eyes and say: "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner." Long ago, religion—the belief of a humble soul in a power above himself—had ceased to have any influence over him; long ago he had turned away and said: "I must rely on myself;" and now, terrible thought, self seemed to fail him. But courage is the last virtue to leave the spirit of man; and Mr. Kestell gathered up what remained of it. So, by the time Jones faced his master, Mr. Kestell had made out his plan of action.

"Jones, the ladies want the curtains drawn. By-and-by, put another light here. I want the lamp in my study. I won't wait for my own to be lit. Vicary is in my study, I suppose? I will let him out."

"Yes, sir. Shall I take the lamp into your study, sir?"

"No; go to the drawing-room. I will carry the light myself."

Mr. Kestell felt that nothing would have induced him to enter that room in the dark; and certainly he had never in all his life been called a coward.

Thus it happened that Jesse first saw the dazzling gleam of the lamp before he recognised that it was Mr. Kestell himself who carried it.

This latter placed it on the writing-table, without saying a word; and Jesse, who was standing by the fireplace, was silent also. Neither of them held out his hand; and, without any previous words, each understood—but how differently!—that there was to be no peace between them.

Blind with anger as was Jesse, the force of habit is so strong that—as his quick glance noted the outline of the old man; noted the white hair, as of old, just

touching the coat-collar; noted the more haggard lines of the features and the far greater pallor of the face—he was stopped in his first mad wish to seize him by the arm.

The result of this feeling on Jesse was that for a few moments he remained silent, and that, unlike his original intention, he allowed Mr. Kestell to have the first word.

The lamp was on the table and the door was shut close before Mr. Kestell turned towards Jesse and said:

"You told my daughter that you wanted me, Jesse. I have come, though you have chosen a very unfortunate time."

"Yes," said Jesse, so strong in his virtuous indignation, that he did not notice that Mr. Kestell called him by his Christian instead of surname; nor did he choose to notice the tone of deep sadness in which the words were uttered. "Yes, I have chosen this time because all time is the same to me; and I care not at all whether you are marrying your daughter or further imposing upon the world by some act of benevolence. I have come here to get justice at last; justice from you, Mr. Kestell. Remember, I have asked for it before; but now I insist upon it. If you—refuse me"—Jesse's voice quivered, for, having once found the power of speech, he was not to be stopped—"I will proclaim it publicly. If you deny me, I will insist on your proving me wrong; otherwise, your own silence will condemn you as it has done once before."

Jesse had nothing to hide. His conscience, so he thought, was guiltless, and he stood up straight and powerful, and fixed his eyes upon Mr. Kestell's face. Here was another proof of the old man's guilt—if that were wanted—for Jesse saw that the blue eyes were at once bent to the ground, and that the hand that rested on the table trembled visibly.

"What justice do you want?" said Mr. Kestell, in a very low voice.

"What justice? How can you ask me; you—you who have posed so long for a good man; you who made me believe in you when I was young; who—who—And now you ask what justice? Is it not the justice of my whole life that I am asking for: the justice of my birth; the justice of the lonely boyhood; the scorned youth; the struggles of my manhood? Is not that enough reparation to ask for; but if you want more, take it. Do you think, Mr. Kestell, that I am the blind Jesse

Vicary you once thought me, and that you wished me to remain? Do you think that I do not see clearly the truth now, and that anything can veil it from me any more? Do you think that it has not eaten into my very heart, and taken from me peace of mind and soul, and all because you are a mean coward, and cannot own, even to yourself, that you have broken the laws of man and of God; and you fancy that by hiding them and making me suffer for your sins, you can blot them out?"

The storm of passion seemed to shake Jesse as the blast of wind sways the forest trees; stranger still, it appeared to have the opposite effect on the accused who stood before the bar. His calmness was as the calmness of the cyclone: calm, terrible, and awe-inspiring. Whilst Jesse had been hurling out his accusation, Mr. Kestell's ashy-pale lips had moved. The inaudible words he said were:

"How can he know? Who has told him? It must be Hoel Fenner. But no one can know the whole truth. Even now I can repair the evil—even now." When Jesse paused, Mr. Kestell said again, quite calmly:

"Tell me, Jesse, what justice do you want? What sum of money will satisfy you? And, if you are a man, tell me plainly what you want, and I will do my best to satisfy you; but spare me many words for the sake of the innocent."

Jesse was not pacified by these words; on the contrary, they were like a sudden blast upon a burning rick of hay.

"What justice? What sum of money? Money, money! Do you ask me that? Do you so little understand any honourable feeling belonging to a man who—Heaven help him!—calls himself a gentleman? Money! Why, I have already had too much of your miserable gold. I have had more than the law allows me; but, if it was in my power, I would throw you back every penny you ever spent upon me, ay, to the uttermost farthing. Have you not tried to force me to accept more of your money by depriving me of honest employment? Do you think that I do not know that it was your evil work that turned me out of Card's office? You thought to make me accept your Canadian farm. Now, here is my answer: Not one penny of your money will I accept, not one; but all the same I will have justice."

Mr. Kestell raised his eyes to Jesse's face, and the look that was in them was one of utter amazement. Had Jesse not

been mad and possessed by evil anger, he might have read astonishment in the look. As it was, he put down to another hypocrite's trick both the look and the words that followed. Mr. Kestell put out his hand in a deprecating manner, and was going to exclaim; but suddenly he altered his mind as he said:

"I do not understand you. If you will not have money, what will you have? Have you no pity? Do you want me to—"

"Yes," said Jesse, quickly. "I want you to be honest and proclaim the injustice you have done me all these years. You, who have posed as my benefactor, as my protector; who have pretended I was but a child saved from the workhouse. No, not me alone, but my sister—an innocent girl. I wish you to own at last your sin, and to take away from us the stigma of our birth. Own it once, and then do not be afraid I shall trouble you again or allow Symee to do so, for the sake of my poor mother, whom, no doubt, your cruelty killed. You shall own that, if we are outcasts, it is because to you, the rich man, the much-respected Kestell of Greystone, it is because it is to you we owe our existence."

Jesse made a step forward, as if, in his blind anger, he would willingly seize Mr. Kestell by the throat and make him speak out his confession then and there at the risk of his life.

No wonder that anger is called blind; no wonder that its fierce power entirely sweeps away judgement and sense; otherwise, Jesse must have noted that the man before him seemed all at once to change; that a faint colour stole over his thin, pale cheeks, and then he heaved a deep sigh, as it were almost of relief.

"You want me to sign a declaration of the truth about your birth?" he said. "Is that the justice you want?"

"Yes. If I am to carry the stigma to my death, at least you, the author of it, shall bear it, too."

"You will not accept compensation?"

"No! a thousand times no! Besides, I have no right to any. You have done your legal duty. It is in the sight of Heaven that you will learn the moral right of every one of its children. There are some crimes which will be judged only at the last day."

"Jesse, you shall have your rights," said Mr. Kestell, in a very low voice, "you shall have your rights; but have

some mercy—wait till to-morrow. After all these years, it is not asking much of you. Wait till my dear child is married; to-morrow afternoon or to-morrow evening. Give me till six o'clock—till eight o'clock. Name your time, and then come and find me here. If you like, after that time, you can proclaim your wrongs; only wait till then. I am asking a very short respite. If you have ever had a kindly feeling towards me, let that influence you a little, and grant me till then—till to-morrow. I want to spare her. She is a daughter whom no father could help loving. For her sake, not for mine, not for mine, wait these few hours."

The old man's voice trembled in its suppressed eagerness; the very mention of Elva's name gave him strength to humble himself before his accuser. Had it been necessary, he felt as if he could have knelt to ask this short respite, only this for Elva's sake. He had hoped so much—not prayed, how could he pray?—that his enemy would not find him out till after that; nay, more, let not the truth be suppressed, Mr. Kestell had hoped to escape altogether. But the blow had now fallen in a way that gave him, even at this eleventh hour, the power of asking for this delay.

Jesse Vicary had expected scorn and anger. He was utterly unprepared for this supplicating tone. It suddenly unnerved him, threw him off the high pinnacle of passion he had climbed up to. He felt bewildered for the moment.

"Mr. Kestell of Greystone wants to avoid publicity," he said, scornfully, stooping to pick up his hat. "It did not matter how many months and years the children, good enough only for the workhouse, were pointed at in scorn. But let that pass; it is perhaps impossible for some natures to understand honour. Have your delay, Mr. Kestell. Go and have yet one more triumph; but to-morrow I will have your written acknowledgement to do with as I like, and as I think best. I will have the truth."

The two men, who had so terribly changed places, were standing close by each other as Jesse said these words, throwing into them all the scorn learnt from mental suffering; but Mr. Kestell seemed barely to hear them. He was evidently calculating the precious minutes allowed to him.

"Very well, Jesse. Then to-morrow, at seven o'clock, come here. I will leave orders that you are to be admitted. And, one



thing more, I should be very glad if—if it were possible that you should try and forgive. Remember, you will never be able to judge of another man's temptation."

Jesse Vicary did not answer. He merely walked out of the room, and into the chilly evening air of the wide moor.

#### CHAPTER LI. ALONE AT NIGHT.

WHEN the door shut upon Jesse Vicary, Mr. Kestell remained standing in deep thought, near to the window, which had not had the curtain drawn across it. He watched the retreating form of Jesse with a dull, puzzled look upon his face, as if he hardly took in the result of the interview. Gradually, however, his ideas shaped themselves into some sort of coherence, and the inward agitation showed itself by a cold clamour which spread all over his white forehead. He looked ten years older than he had done before entering the room.

"It has come at last," he murmured; "but not as I expected. He fancied that it is that which has ruined him. What will he think when he knows the truth? What will the world think? What is the world compared to Elva and Celia? No, they must never know—never. How can I prevent it—how, how? Whilst there is life there is hope, men say. Something unforeseen must happen; something may turn up. Strange things have happened. He may die between now and then—die! die!"

He dwelt on the word as if it were one he had only just heard, and was trying to accustom his ears to. He took hold of the heavy curtain with his left hand, and supported himself thus, whilst he passed his right slowly across his forehead.

He then realised that he was wishing Jesse Vicary to die; that if some one could at this moment bring him the news of his death he would reward them handsomely. Was that murder? Something like it. And the hideous idea seemed to take shape, and become like a thin phantom, that floated near him and nearly touched him.

"Button died, and I felt freer. But there were other proofs. They have been growing, growing for years. The cloud was no bigger than a man's hand at first; it has grown—it has been increasing for years. It is like a weight upon me. The air is heavy—oppressive. I cannot breathe."

As if it were really hot, Mr. Kestell pushed back the spring-lock of the window and threw up the sash. The cold night-air poured in, like water into a newly-made rift in a ship, and with this fresh tide of air the ideas in his over-heated brain changed suddenly.

"Oh, Heaven, is there mercy in man? What if I had told him all—all? Would he have had pity, would he have understood? No, youth is pitiless—pitiless. For this mad idea he was ready to kill me. But for the truth—ah, no. I did well to wait—to ask for this delay. Shall I face it, face it like a man, or face—that other thing? They will all know—ah, but Celia and her relations. Celia, oh, my darling, it was for you, for you that I did it. But what have I given you, and what have you given me in return? Has it been altogether a vast deception? Would it have been better otherwise? No, no, it could not have been. At least, you have been happy, and the others—your children—our children. Elva, yes. But Amice— There, there again, curse it! that phantom follows me—looks at me with those cavernous eyes. Eh, what am I saying? Are my senses going? Was it all worth this—this agony, such a little sin—sin? What is it? Ambiguous word, invented by the priestcraft of all ages! Who made it sin? Why not do the best we can for ourselves? Thousands of worse things are called good every day. Sharp practice? What is all life but sharp practice? The law is founded on it. If I had done it openly, what would any one have said?

"What would John have said—John—John Pellew. You are here. No, what am I saying? If you knew you would forgive. I spent every penny on them, and more—much more. And their name—what is in a name; how many care about a name? A man makes his own name; Jesse would have made his if he would have been guided. Foolish fellow, he would not, he would not—What am I doing here? The time is so short, so very short, and there is much to do. If I could go back step by step to the very beginning I would act differently. I would have guarded myself better, but then at the end, the very end, would John have required it of me? Humbug! pure nonsense! Who has come back from the grave to explain it? Ah, but if it should be true?"

A gentle knock at the door recalled Mr. Kestell to common thoughts, for very

seldom is it that a man, even in the crucial moments of his life, indulges in long soliloquy. The floodgate of thought is so strange and overwhelming that it is difficult to represent it through the medium of words, any more than one can describe how the breeze becomes a hurricane, for thought is one of life's greatest mysteries.

"Papa, papa, are you there? Is Mr. Vicary gone? Amice was afraid you were ill."

Elva entered; her own face was pale and careworn, she had gone through a great deal this day, and now the evening had brought new anxiety in the person of Amice. She was evidently in a very nervous state.

"Ah, it is you, Elva. Come in, dear; I am alone."

"What did Jesse Vicary want, papa? Has he thought better of the Canadian idea? Did he mention Symee? How I do miss her now. Our new maid is so stupid."

"A little matter of business, dear; you must go to bed and rest. You will have so much to think of to-morrow."

"Don't talk about to-morrow. It is to-day I shall remember all my life. Papa, you don't half understand what I am doing for you, you believe it will be for my happiness; well, there, to make you think yourself a good prophet it shall be for my happiness."

"Walter loves you," said Mr. Kestell—then going to his desk, he drew from it a sealed envelope. "Look, dear, I was going to give you this to-morrow, but I will do so now. When you are on your honeymoon think that your old father is happy because you are enjoying yourself."

He himself opened the envelope and drew from it a Bank of England note for a thousand pounds.

"But, papa, that is too much—I shall want for nothing; remember—"

"I wish you to keep this, dear, and spend it in things for yourself. It is safer in this way so that you can change it easily." He folded it up and closed her fingers over it with a smile. "There, go away and sleep, and I must rest too. Your mother will not rise early."

"Good night, papa, good night."

She kissed him very tenderly, and moved away for fear of breaking down; but he called her back.

"Say it again, darling, put your arm round my neck. It is very terrible to lose a child. It unnerves me."

She could see this was true as she obeyed, but this time her tears fell fast upon his cheeks.

"We must be brave, dearest," he said; "for my sake you will be brave to-morrow?"

"I will."

"And you will try and remember that life is not all sweetness, child; you must be patient with Walter. I know he loves you."

"Hush, papa, we must not say any more about that!"

"You will never let him—or any one—poison your mind about your father? Promise me."

"What an idea! Who would dare? If Walter tried to do so, I would leave him—I would, indeed. There"—Elva forced a smile on her lips—"that is answer enough. Good night."

"Good-bye, dearest. And now go to bed."

Elva went upstairs with a heavy heart, but with a firm determination to be brave.

"It quite upsets papa if I am sad. I will not think; I must try and sleep, and forget. Amice is right—papa does look ill."

She went to a drawer and unlocked it. It was full of letters. Resolutely she took them out and tore them across, and put them in the grate. When all of them were burnt, she heaved a little sigh.

"If the past could be destroyed as easily," she thought. "If I knew, if—Am I doing right? Ought I to do this thing? I can never love again. But marriage does not always mean that sort of love. No, no, it cannot. That comes but once—but once. Is not filial duty something very great, very precious in God's sight? It has a commandment to itself, 'Honour thy father and thy mother;' and papa's greatest wish is that I should marry Walter. Would he wish something that he knew would be against my happiness? He must judge better than I can—he who has loved so deeply, so devotedly. I will try to make Walter a good wife, only I dread it, I dread it so much, so very much."

Elva fell on her knees, and hid her face in her hands. She tried to pray, and the words would not come. But prayer is far above mere words; and she who needed so much help could only ask dumbly for comfort. The terrible misgiving, which would not, even now at this eleventh

hour, be thrust away, crushed her. Was she doing right? Was self-denial in a case like this a self-denial acceptable to God?

"But girls marry every day for money and position," she said aloud, rising, and pacing her room in deep agitation. "I have loved once, why cannot that love be crushed out utterly? It must be; it shall be. Where does sacrifice end? Is it not the highest work on earth? Does not Amice think so—dear Amice? For her sake, too, I must be quite composed. She does not approve of what I am doing because she cannot understand my love for papa."

Elva shivered a little; it seemed as if she were slowly dying, as if all the fullness of happiness which had once been hers was now only a mockery. It had been a beautiful picture spread out before her in order to make her realise still more her present misery. Even now what she most wished to forget sprang into her mind with the active freshness of new events. She paused before her bookshelf, and her eyes rested on "An Undine of To-day." Now she could see very plainly all its faults. She had had the baptism of suffering, and she remembered Hoel's words about good writing being bought at the price of suffering. Ah! she had suffered now, and Hoel had given it her. Strange that through him she had learnt the power of pain, the power of that mysterious agony in a world which is so very visibly formed for beauty and joy, and which also is unmistakably impressed with pain. We seem compelled to hand round sorrow to our neighbours when they are crying out to us to give them the opposite; but strangest, and most divine mystery, through suffering is taught the highest knowledge, the knowledge of a Divine love.

Elva could not realise all this yet. She could only catch a glimmer of it through the darkness of her great sorrow; but the glimmer was a slight comfort, and soothed her weary brain. It was like ice on a burning temple, like momentary cessation of pain when the sufferer fancies he can bear no more.

Presently Elva remembered that if she did not rest she could never go bravely through the wedding-service of the morrow; and, forcing herself to still her thoughts, she went to bed. There was not anything in her room to remind her of her wedding. She had said she would not have it

crowded with any presents or wedding-clothes. For one more night she would be the girl who had lived a happy life. Poor Elva, she realised strongly that it is the mind alone which makes or mars our happiness; the outward circumstances only so far as they disturb the seat of conscious life.

There was certainly nothing to remind her of her wedding. But, all the same, she slept but little, and the grey dawn found her with but the smallest remains of the courage which had till now sustained her.

Little did she guess, through all this self-torture, that the father for whom she was doing this had never gone to bed at all.

When Elva was gone, and all the household had retired, Mr. Kestell still sat on in his study. He had much to do, apparently, for he wrote on patiently for several hours. His hand trembled now and then from weariness, perhaps, but at other times the bold characters came out strong and clearly on his paper. Once or twice he rose to go to the old bureau, and to take out papers and examine them. Once, too, he started up, and seized his closely-written sheet, and taking it in both hands, nearly tore it across—nearly; not quite. Second thoughts altered his intention, and once more he sat down and continued writing.

It was three o'clock in the morning before he had finished; the lamp still burnt brightly, but the ashy grey look on the old man's face would have moved any one's pity. He was very, very weary, but he would not own it even to himself.

The business he had set before himself was done; the most important part of it was contained in a sealed envelope of the ordinary size, and a large blue cover which spoke of business pure and simple. On the outside of this he wrote in clear characters: "My last will," and the date.

The sealed letter was addressed to

"John J. Pellew, Esq."

"To be read after my death."

This he enclosed in another envelope, on which could be read: "To be given to J. Vicary."

He pushed back the writing-case and the rest of the writing materials as if he were sick to death of them, and then he opened a small secret drawer fixed within one of the smaller drawers of his writing-table, and took out from it an enve-

lope, faded, and tied with old-fashioned ribbon.

These were the secrets the envelope contained :

A small note in a fine Italian hand, signed "Celia Orenden." A lock of pale, fair hair, somewhat dull of hue, and somewhat faded, too, by age. And, lastly, two smaller locks of hair folded in a white paper, on which was written "Elva and Amice;" and two dates.

He put this last back in the drawer; the other, after kissing it reverently, he placed in his waistcoat-pocket; the note he gazed at a long time before he enclosed it in his pocket-book.

"Celia, my darling," he murmured, "it was for you, all for you, my wife, my wife, my only love."

Then he sat quite motionless for a time, as if the very words were a comfort to him, and lastly he rose, and lighting a candle, he stole upstairs.

Again he noticed the stupid stare of the round-faced sun in the clock; again he paused, as if angry at the intrusion of this poor, lifeless daub, and quite mechanically he repeated :

"I must have that altered next time I drive into Greystone; I have always forgotten it."

When he reached the landing he stopped, and listened just as if he were a thief who for a moment was conscience-stricken when about to commit his crime. It was a strange feeling to have in your own house; but it swept over him strongly, and caused him to tread more softly, and every now and then to pause again and listen.

But all was silent at this hour, not a creature was moving in the house; a very faint murmur of wind swept along the eaves, and a far-off cock-crow reached his ears.

That was all.

Then Mr. Kestell paused before his wife's door, and listened attentively, putting his head close to it. Was she asleep? Often Mrs. Kestell would wake very early—this insomnia being caused by a life entirely without exertion—and then towards five or six o'clock she would fall asleep again, and declare in the morning she had had a wretched night.

Mr. Kestell waited to ascertain if this was one of her wakeful hours. How earnestly he listened till the throb of the blood in the arteries could be heard in his ears; at last his listening was rewarded by the faint sound of a cough.

She was then probably awake—awake and conscious; what was she thinking of? Did he find a place in her recollections of the past? Probably she was meditating about the details of Elva's wedding. Did she from this go on to recall her own marriage; the devotion which had been hers then and since; the love which had risen above all, disappointment, and above the rebuffs of a wife who suffered from ennui; the love which even now partook of the passion of youth, and the intense desire that she above all others should think well and kindly of him?

How he longed to open the door; how intensely he desired to go up to her and give her one kiss, and pour out the sorrow of his heart, and to tell her that it was for her sake that he had done this thing.

But almost as soon as the wish was formed, it was crushed. Celia would be alarmed at his untimely appearance. She would declare that he had given her palpitations, and disabled her for the fatigues of the next day. Therefore he only listened, and then with a whispered, "Celia, Celia, my darling, good-bye," he raised himself to his full height, and went silently on to his own room.



